

CASSANDRA NGUYEN |
THE COLLEGIAN

Sophomore guard **Nigel Johnson** tries to block a pass as Oklahoma sophomore guard **Jordan Woodard** makes a pass during the first half of the game against the Sooners on Feb. 14 in Bramlage Coliseum. The Wildcats took a victory of 59-56 against No. 17 Oklahoma.

MASON SWENSON |
THE COLLEGIAN

The K-State student section holds up the Octagon of Doom sign during the Sunflower Showdown on Feb. 23. The Wildcats defeated the Jayhawks 70-63.



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Senior forward **Thomas Gipson** tries to block a shot from Iowa State guard **Monte Morris** in the second-half of the Wildcats' 70-69 toppling of No. 12 Cyclones on Feb. 28 in Bramlage Coliseum.

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The curious case of K-State men's basketball

TATE STEINLAGE
THE COLLEGIAN

Weird. Let's get that out of the way. This K-State men's basketball team has been weird. Heck, their whole season has been weird, and there's really no other way to describe it.

Just when you thought head coach Bruce Weber and company were about to take off and finally realize their full potential, another setback — suspension, poor performance,

apathy — occurred as K-State tip-toed their way on the line of mediocrity.

This wasn't always the case, though. When the team opened the season with a 98-point offensive outburst in a 30-point win over Southern Utah, folks around Manhattan thought this was the group that was advertised as athletic, strong and deep in personnel.

But then the nonconference season took an awkward turn. Sure, the Wildcats nearly upset No. 3 Arizona at the Maui Invitational, but a trio of ugly (that's putting it lightly, too) losses to Texas Southern, Georgia and Oklahoma State saw the team at .500 for the first time all season.

Then the weird set in. K-State responded positively with five wins in six games to take over the top spot in a

competitive Big 12 Conference. The Wildcats then proceeded to lose their next four-straight games, get embarrassed (twice) in Texas and then magically upset two top-15 ranked teams. Weird.

K-State is now under .500. The Wildcats have just one shot at an NCAA Tournament bid, and that's to win the Big 12 Tournament — a feat on par with the Miracle on Ice (just kidding ... sort of). It's win or bust, and that goes for the team's NIT chances too.

This season has been the curious case of K-State men's basketball. Unpredictable. Thrilling. Mediocre. But most all, weird.

Tate Steinlage is a junior in mass communications. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

“This season has been the curious case of K-State men's basketball. Unpredictable. Thrilling. Mediocre. But most of all, weird.”

TATE STEINLAGE
SPORTS EDITOR, THE COLLEGIANRODNEY DIMICK | THE COLLEGIAN
Wildcat teammates celebrate after a play on Nov. 14, 2014 in Bramlage Coliseum. K-State won 98-68 against Southern Utah.RODNEY DIMICK | THE COLLEGIAN
Sophomore guard **Jevon Thomas** dribbles around a Southern Utah player on Nov. 17, 2014 in Bramlage Coliseum.



GEORGE WALKER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State head coach **Bruce Weber** uses a timeout to talk with his team during the game against Nebraska-Omaha on Dec. 2, 2014 in Bramlage Coliseum. K-State defeated Omaha-Nebraska 84-66.



RODNEY DIMICK | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State junior guard **Justin Edwards** drives around Bradley freshman forward **Donte Thomas** on Dec. 9, 2014 at Bramlage Coliseum. The Wildcats won 50-47 against Bradley University.



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Sophomore forward **Wesley Iwundu** drives through several Texas Tech players to the basket in the opening minutes of the second half of the Wildcats' 58-51 win over the Red Raiders Jan. 14 in Bramlage Coliseum.



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Sophomore guard **Marcus Foster** shouts emphatically after forcing an Oklahoma State turnover near the beginning of the second half of the Wildcats' 63-53 defeat of the Cowboys on Jan. 24 in Bramlage Coliseum.



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Freshman forward **Malek Harris** digs in against Baylor guard and forward **Ishmail Wainright** in the first half of the Wildcats' 63-61 come-from-behind victory over the No. 22 Bears on Jan. 17 in Bramlage Coliseum.



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

West Virginia sophomore forward **Nathan Adrian** steals the ball from K-State senior forward **Thomas Gipson** as Gipson loses control of the ball beneath the basket in the second half of the Wildcats' brutal 65-59 loss to No. 17 Mountaineers on Jan. 27 in Bramlage Coliseum.

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